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Dear Colleagues:

The first round CESUs are approaching their five-year anniversary dates in May and June 2004. The cooperative/joint venture agreements for these CESUs will be up for renewal at that time. Hence, a necessary step is the review and decision on renewal of the Colorado Plateau, North Atlantic Coast, Rocky Mountains, and Southern Appalachian Mountains CESUs. The CESU Council has approved the steps and criteria that will be used in this process; the goal is an efficient review and a timely renewal.

Enclosed is a brief guide that has been prepared for the host universities and partner institutions, and approved by the CESU Council. This guide describes the purpose of the review and renewal, criteria for evaluation, overview of the review and renewal process, and review materials needed from the host universities (working with their non-federal partners). Please distribute the guide as useful.

We will contact you soon to schedule a teleconference with all four of the host university representatives (and other interested parties) to review these materials and answer any questions you might have.

We look forward to these first renewals as an opportunity to learn more about your CESU activities, and to move forward in the development of the CESU Network.

Sincerely,

/signed/ Gary Machlis

Dr. Gary E. Machlis
CESU National Coordinator



Purpose of the CESU Review and Renewal

Each Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) cooperative/joint venture agreement has a term of five years from the effective date of execution. The effective date is determined from the date of the last signature on the agreement. Each CESU agreement states that the activities of the CESU can be continued for another five-year period by mutual consent of the parties to the agreement (Article III B).

The objectives of the CESU review and decision on renewal are to:

- assess mutual consent in continuing the activities of the CESU,
- evaluate the activities of each CESU over the last five years, including collaborative responsibilities described in each agreement, and
- renew each agreement, as appropriate.

General Criteria

Four general criteria guide the CESU review. Each criterion is presented as a question. The four general criteria are:

1. Were the formal commitments identified in the CESU agreement (and amendments) fulfilled?
2. Were the projects successfully completed, and was there effective delivery of relevant and high quality project results to managers, consistent with the mission of the CESU?
3. Was there involvement of partner institutions as appropriate in the activities and projects of the CESU?
4. Did the CESU facilitate collaboration and substantial involvement among its participants?

Overview of the Review and Renewal Process

CESU Council staff will coordinate the review through the Host Universities and Managers Committees. This review will include four key elements:

1. The host university prepares a letter of interest describing the interest and intent of the host and each of its non-federal partners to renew the CESU. The host university sends this letter to CESU Council staff by 15 January 2004.
2. The host university, working with its non-federal partners, prepares a brief CESU self-assessment. The host university sends this self-assessment to CESU Council staff by 15 January 2004.
3. The CESU managers committee prepares a brief review and recommendation to the CESU Council concerning renewal. (The managers committee will receive a copy of the CESU self-assessment.) The managers committee sends its review to CESU Council staff by 1 March 2004.

4. The CESU managers committee identifies one to three external reviewers (the number of reviewers to be determined by the managers committee). The external reviewers prepare an independent review and recommendation to the CESU Council concerning renewal. (The external reviewers will receive a copy of the CESU self-assessment.) The external reviewers send their review to CESU Council staff by 1 March 2004.

CESU Council staff will assemble these materials and forward them to the CESU Council. After the Council has examined the review materials, it will decide on the renewal of each CESU in March 2004. CESU Council staff will then coordinate the renewal of the agreements as appropriate in April-May 2004.

Review Materials Needed from the Host University

The host university, working with its partner institutions, prepares materials for two key elements of the CESU review:

1. A *letter of interest* describing the interest and intent of the host and its non-federal partners to renew the CESU.
2. A brief *CESU self-assessment*.

All review materials should be assembled electronically and emailed to the National CESU Coordinator by **15 January 2004**.

Letter of Interest

A key part of the CESU review and renewal process is for the host and partners to declare their interest in continuing the activities of each CESU. The host university should prepare a brief *letter of interest* to the CESU Council, addressed to the CESU National Coordinator, that includes information about the following items:

- the host university's interest in and intent to continue hosting the CESU,
- the interest in and intent of each partner institution to continue participating in the CESU,

[The host university should contact each of its current non-federal partners about their participation. The letter of interest should specifically identify partners that want to continue and partners that do not. Separate letters from each of the non-federal partners are not required.]

- the interest and intent of other universities/institutions that the current CESU host, partners, and federal agencies would like to include as new additions to the CESU agreement.

CESU Self-Assessment

The host university, working with its non-federal partner institutions, should prepare a *CESU self-assessment* reflecting on the five-year agreement period. This self-assessment should be brief – approximately 3-5 pages. The self-assessment should reflect the four general criteria listed below. For each general criterion, there are a series of specific review questions that can help

organize the self-assessment. The host university may wish to include documentation in an appendix.

The host university and partner institutions are also strongly encouraged to provide additional information and insights about the CESU that they deem useful to share with the CESU Council for the development of the CESU Network.

Criterion 1:

Were the formal commitments identified in the CESU agreement (and amendments) fulfilled?

1. Did the host university and partner institutions conduct with participating federal agencies a program of research, technical assistance and education related to the CESU objectives?
2. Did the host university and partner institutions develop and adopt with participating federal agencies a CESU role and mission statement?
3. Did the host university and partner institutions develop and adopt with participating federal agencies a multi-year CESU strategic plan?
4. Were periodic meetings of the CESU convened for the purpose of collaboration and coordination of CESU activities?
5. Did the host university and partner institutions develop with participating federal agencies annual work plans to guide the activities of the CESU?
6. Were students encouraged to participate in the activities of the CESU?
7. Did the host university and partner institutions offer educational and training opportunities to participating federal agencies' employees?
8. Did the host university provide basic administrative and clerical support, access to campus facilities, suitable office space and basic services for federal agencies' personnel to be located at the host university?
9. Did the host university coordinate activities, as appropriate, with the partner institutions and develop administrative policies for such coordination?
10. Did the host university establish a CESU Managers Committee and convene annual meetings?

Criterion 2:

Were the projects successfully completed, and was there effective delivery of relevant and high quality project results to managers, consistent with the mission of the CESU?

1. Were projects conducted successfully, with all project deliverables accepted by collaborating federal agency(s) providing project funds?
2. Were some projects unsuccessful, with project deliverables rejected by collaborating federal agency(s) providing project funds?
3. Did the host university and partner institutions provide effective delivery of relevant and high quality project results to managers, consistent with the mission of the CESU?



Criterion 3:

Was there involvement of the partner institutions as appropriate in the activities and projects of the CESU?

1. Did partner institutions participate in activities of the CESU?
2. Did partner institutions participate in projects of the CESU?

Criterion 4:

Did the CESU facilitate collaboration and substantial involvement among its federal agency partners?

For more information, contact:

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